

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE - CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S OFFICE

PASS AMBASSADOR VANCE - BOGOTA

FOR NARCOTICS COORDINATORS

1. THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S OFFICE - TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1976 - IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

--AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE HAVE BEEN SECURED BY U.S. REP LESTER WOLFF (D-N.Y.) AND REP. BEN GILMAN (R-N.Y.) WHICH WOULD SET UP JOINT WORKING COMMISSIONS IN MEXICO, COLOMBIA, PANAMA AND COSTA RICA TO HALT THE FLOW OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF HEROIN AND COCAINE FROM SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA INTO THE UNITED STATES.

WOLFF, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL SUBCOMMITTEE, TOLD A WASHINGTON D.C. PRESS CONFERENCE THAT "THE PRESIDENT AND THE HIGHEST OFFICIALS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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EACH GOVERNMENT HAVE FOR THE FIRST TIME PUBLICALLY PLEDGED

ACCEPTANCE OF A COMMON PROBLEM -- THE TRAFFICKING IN HARD DRUGS -- AND THUS TAKEN A KEY STEP TOWARDS ELIMINATING THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN NARCOTICS PRESENTLY TRAVELING THE 'LATIN-MANHATTAN TRAIL' INTO OUR COUNTRY."

"HOWEVER," WOLFF AND GILMAN WARNED, "THE STATE DEPARTMENT MUST BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP ON THESE INITIATIVES, AND CARRY OUT PRESIDENT FORD'S CHRISTMAS PLEDGE TO DO WHAT-EVER IS NECESSARY TO WIN THE WAR ON DRUGS."

WOLFF SAID MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT LUIS ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO PROVIDED THE BREAKTHROUGH FOR THE ENTIRE MISSION, AS ECHEVERRIA HIMSELF PRESIDED OVER A SIX-HOUR MEETING DURING WHICH HIGH OFFICIALS OF HIS GOVERNMENT HAMMERED OUT AN AGREEMENT WITH WOLFF, GILMAN AND U.S. OFFICIALS BASED ON ECHEVERRIA'S PROPOSED WORKING COMMISSION TO MONITOR AND COORDINATE U.S.-MEXICAN DRUG EFFORTS.

SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS ON THE JANUARY 6-17 MISSION WITH PRESIDENT DANIEL ODUBER OF COSTA RICA, PRESIDENT DEMETRIO LUKAS OF PANAMA, AND PRESIDENT ALFONSO LOPEZ OF COLUMBIA PRODUCED SIMILAR COMMITMENTS OF COOPERATION, COUPLED WITH REQUESTS FOR MEANINGFUL, AND SWIFT U.S. AID, WOLFF SAID.

THE CONGRESSMEN SAID THEY ARE SEEKING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD TO DELIVER A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM ECHEVERRIA, AND TO DISCUSS HOW BEST TO CONSOLIDATE THE DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGHS OPENED UP DURING THE STUDY MISSION. CRUCIAL WILL BE STATE DEPARTMENT ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING MEETINGS WITH THE U.S. AMBASSADORS TO CHILE, PERU, BOLIVIA AND ECUADOR -- THE NATIONS WHICH ACTUALLY PRODUCE THE COCAINE WHICH PASSES THROUGH COLUMBIA ANNUALLY FOR SOME DOLLARS 500 MILLION IN "WHOLESALE" PRICES.

WOLFF SAID OFFICIALS IN ALL FOUR COUNTRIES VISITED SAID LACK OF STATE DEPARTMENT INITIATIVE IN RESPONDING TO REQUESTS, AND FAILURE TO PROVIDE TIMELY EQUIPMENT AND TO FULFILL OTHER SUPPORT FUNCTIONS THAT HAD BEEN AGREED UPON CONTRIBUTED TO THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM. WOLFF ADDED, UNCLASSIFIED

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"THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE WAS MOST DISAPPOINTING, PARTICULARLY IN ITS CAVALIER TREATMENT OF WHAT WE SPENT SO MUCH TIME DISCUSSING BEFORE CHRISTMAS, AND I TRUST THE ADMINISTRATION WILL KEEP ITS PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO DO 'WHATEVER IT TAKES' TO CUT OFF HEROIN."

"WE NOW FACE A MARCH DEADLINE FOR COMPLETED ACTION," WOLFF

SAID, BECAUSE THE 17,000 OPIUM POPPY FIELDS IN MEXICO  
WHICH THEIR GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO LOCATE AND DESTROY  
WILL BE IN BLOOM THEN." SISCO

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